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OF
NAVAL WAR GAMING

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Naval War College

1974-1975

Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island
Oral History Program

Naval War Gaming Project

Naval War Gaming
at the Naval War College, 1921-1925

Interviewee:
Mr. Walter Dring, Jr.
28 Esplanade, Middletown, Rhode Island
Interviewer:
Mr. Anthony S. Nicolosi

February 21, 1975

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, R.I.

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE AGREEMENT

You have been asked for information to be used in connection with the Oral History Program at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. The purpose of this program is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use.

A tape recording of your interview will be made by the interviewer, and a typescript of the tape will be made and submitted to you for editing. The final retyped and edited transcript, together with the tape of the interview will then be placed in the Naval War College Naval Historical Collection. Other institutions or persons may obtain a copy. These materials may be made available for purposes of research, for instructional use, for publications, or for other related purposes.

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I, Walter Dring, Jr., have read the
(Interviewee, please print)

above and, in view of the historical and scholarly value of this information, and in return for a final typed copy of the transcript, I knowingly and voluntarily permit the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, the full use of this information. I hereby grant and assign all my rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now known, recognized, or contemplated, to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Walter Dring Jr.
Interviewee (Signature)

21 Sep 1975
Date

Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island
Oral History Program

Naval War Gaming Project

Interviewee: Mr. Walter Dring, Jr., 28 Esplanade, Middletown,
Rhode Island

Interviewer: Mr. Anthony S. Nicolosi

Subject: Naval War Gaming, Naval War College, 1921-1925

Date: February 21, 1975

N: This is an interview with Mr. Walter Dring, Jr., of 28 Esplanade, Middletown, Rhode Island, for the Naval War Gaming Project of the Naval War College Oral History Program. My name is Anthony S. Nicolosi, and this recording session is taking place at the home of the interviewee.

Mr. Dring, I've been looking forward to this discussion with you for some time now. I'm sure that your remarks about the War College during the periods 1917, 1921-1925 will be of significant value to our project. To start off with, can we have your date of birth and place of birth.

D: Well, I was born in Newport, Rhode Island, May 25, 1894. My family consisted of my father and mother and four sisters and myself. We were all born and lived in Newport, Rhode Island.

N: What was your father's occupation?

D: My father was a building contractor.

N: Where did you live in Newport?

D: I lived at 24 Old Beach Road in Newport.

N: How about your earliest recollections of the Navy? Was this through the people who lived at your home?

D: Yes. We had such a big house that we had two very large apartments. Back in probably the period 1907-1912, we had Admiral Washington living with us and Admiral E. H. Durrell. Also Admiral George Laws, Admiral Carl T. Vogelgesang, and others.

N: The Navy was very important to Newport then, wasn't it?

D: Absolutely. The city depended upon the Navy.

N: The fleet was here during the summertime?

D: The fleet came in the early part of the summer, and it stayed here until September when it left to go to the southern drill grounds.

N: What was the composition of the fleet then? Was it very large?

D: It was indeed very large, and we had everything in the United States Navy out in Narragansett Bay. All the battle-ships, all the destroyers, all the mother ships, the submarines, and the tenders.

N: How did they tie up out there? There weren't any piers, were there?

D: There weren't any piers and there weren't any mikes. They anchored, and the destroyers tied up at nest, four to a group. They began in back of the torpedo station. The big ships were

over in the Jamestown area where they had over a hundred feet of water. They went most of the way up the bay towards Quonset. The destroyers were scattered all over the bay all the way up to Melville.

N: How about the Torpedo Station? That was a going concern from 1869.

D: The work force of the Torpedo Station, I would say, back in those days was about 300.

N: That many?

D: I would think so. They were all civilian employees, but they did have small classes of torpedo officers over there that were studying torpedo firing and so forth. I happened to meet two torpedo officers back in the early days. One was Kenneth Whiting, who later was the famous naval aviator. One of the other fellows, I think his name was Needham, later was a naval aviator. They studied at the Torpedo Station for probably two years time, I think. Both lived at my home.

N: How are your recollections of the War College during that early period? What did the people think of it?

D: Well, of course, the War College back in those days wasn't too big. Naturally, there weren't too many officers occupying houses in Newport.

N: Do you remember some of the greats associated with the War College, men like William McCarty Little and Alfred Thayer Mahan or Stephen B. Luce?

D: No, they were a little before my time. I remember they were living. As a matter of fact, Stephen B. Luce lived across the bay opposite from where I live now.

N: Do you remember seeing him?

D: Yes. McCarty Little lived on Everett Street, and I remember seeing him. He had a son that later entered the Marine Corps.

N: That's right.

D: I remember them--I'm going on 81 years old and, being very young in those days, I remember seeing these officers when calling on Admirals that were living at our house.

N: Can you give us some impressions of your first association with the War College?

D: I was assigned to the Naval War College in April, 1917. I had enrolled in the Naval Reserve Force on April 7, and later I was assigned to Admiral Newton A. McCulley who had a member of the Russian Navy there. His name was Vladimir Makaroff. He was the son of the famous Admiral Makaroff of the Battle of Port Arthur with whom Admiral McCully had served on a Russian ship as an American observer. I served with him probably for three months. The Admiral was later detached and given a small ship. He left then for Siberia. I later saw him when he came back from Siberia when he was assigned to Staff Headquarters in London, England. I was then transferred from the War College to the Commandant's office in the old

administration building where I served until some time in the spring when I was transferred to New London, Connecticut, and assigned to CAPT A. J. Hepburn, who had command of a sub-chaser detachment enroute to Queenstown, Ireland. We left and went to Queenstown, Ireland, which was Base 6.

N: Can you continue from there? You were at Base 6.

D: After the Armistice Captain Hepburn was detached and ordered to London, England. He had me ordered to London, England, and I was assigned to him for a very short time because he got orders detaching him and orders to the Bureau of Engineering in Washington, DC. But he told me that Admiral McCulley was due to arrive, and he said that I could probably be assigned to him. I told him that I had served with Admiral McCulley for a very short time in 1917, so he said that he'd see to it that I was assigned to him. So when Admiral McCulley arrived, I was assigned to him. It seemed that several months afterwards Admiral McCulley got orders to go to southern Russia. I didn't really want to go to southern Russia. I wanted to stay and see a little more of England and probably try to get a transfer to one of the other countries because there was a great demand for a stenographer. The requests were coming in from all over. So Admiral Huse came along and he relieved Admiral McCulley. Admiral McCulley had left a message with Alger H. Dresel, who was a Lieutenant Commander in Personnel, saying that he thought I should be assigned to Admiral H. P.

Huse. Commander Dresel was telling me--he said, "I served with him as an Ensign. Sorry, Dring, he's a tough man." (Laughter.) Well, I soon found that out. He came into the office, and the first thing he did was to look at the clock on the mantel. The clock wasn't going. He said, "Is that clock going?" And I said, "No, sir." "Well," he said, "turn that clock face to the wall. I won't have a clock in this office that doesn't tell time." I thought then--my days are numbered from now on. Well, I stayed with him from that period on, and we went to Paris just after Christmas in 1919 where he had his headquarters in the Embassy, because we were supposed to go to Berlin, Germany, just as soon as the peace was ratified. He thought it would be closer to Berlin by having everybody ready in Paris. We had our own staff of officers. We had two medical doctors, his own Marine detachment, plus all the automobiles and equipment and so forth. Well, we stayed in Paris until the first of June and no luck from Washington about the ratification of the peace treaty. So finally orders came through ordering Admiral Huse to take command of the European forces, and he was then made a Vice Admiral. I tried to get away from him, and he assured me that he'd let me go if I could get a decent relief. Before I could get the relief, he notified me that I was to go with him to Southampton, England, and join him in the USS PITTSBURGH where he was going to fly his flag as Commander of Naval Forces in Europe, which I did.

I stayed with him then until the spring of 1921 when he was detached in April and ordered home. Of course, he had me transferred back to the states with him.

N: When you came back to the states, did you come . . . ?

D: When I came back to the states, I was discharged out of the Navy. Commander Hugo Koehler, whom I had met in Queens-town, was one of the assistants to Captain Hepburn. Commander Koehler arrived in Newport and he immediately got in touch with me. He knew I was out of the Navy, and he said that he was going to be assigned to Warsaw, Poland, as naval attache. He wanted to know whether I would like to go with him. I went to Washington, and he took me over to the State Department. The State Department said that the salary was so very small that it would be almost impossible for me to live over there. Of course, when they told me what they were going to give me, I had to turn it down. But they assured me that if I wanted to go back to the War College in Newport, they would fix it up so I would be assigned there if I would go back in the Navy. So they said I didn't have to go in the Navy for the full four years, but I could try this out for two years if I wanted to. So I waited for thirty days or so before I agreed. I got in touch with Commander Koehler. He said, "You go back into the Navy for the two years and I'll see that you get assigned to the War College." Well, I got assigned to the War College. I was assigned first to Captain Blawer, who was in charge of

Tactics and the tactical game boards at that time. I served with Captain Lanning until the fall of 1923. At that time I had a little time left to serve because they had asked me to extend my enlistment a year to finish off the gameboards because Captain Lanning didn't want me to go. I'd been on the gameboards then with him for two years. He asked me to extend my enlistment for a year to stay with him, which I did. But Admiral Williams didn't approve of it. Shortly after I extended, he decided that they should get somebody else on the gameboards and that I should be transferred. Well, Captain Lanning wrote to Washington and put up quite a fuss about it. Washington said that it was a pity because I only had nine months left out of that extra year to serve. There wasn't much sense in transferring me for nine months. Anyhow, I was transferred and they had it arranged so I went to a destroyer in the New York Navy Yard. When I went down on board the ship, I met one of the Chief Yeomen that I knew who was then assigned to Admiral Belknap on the COLORADO. He took me over to the ship. Of course, Admiral Belknap knew me at the War College, as he was in charge of Strategy and was always in contact with Captain Lanning during the games. He said he'd like to have me, but he couldn't because Washington wouldn't approve of an additional Chief Yeoman. I think he had either the WEST VIRGINIA or the COLORADO--brand new ships. So at the conclusion of that period on this destroyer, the KING, I got in touch with

Commander Dresel and asked him if there was any possible chance that I could get my old job back at the gameboards at the War College. He pulled strings through somebody else. So the day I was discharged from the KING I immediately reported to the War College. I was a civilian on the gameboards at the War College once again without losing more than two hours time from Narragansett Bay to the dock to the War College. So when I came to the War College this particular time, all of the officers had been detached and transferred.

N: What year was that?

D: That was in August, 1924. Finally, there was a Captain Willis McDowell, and Captain Walter Vernou who were members of the class that knew me when I was on the gameboards with Captain Lanning. They asked me if I would serve with them in the Junior Course. This was the first that I knew of any junior War College course. These were all mostly Lieutenants then, I think. So I served with them until the fall of 1925 when I heard of a vacancy in the Treasury Department in the U.S. Customs Service in Newport. So I put in for the transfer, and I got it. That's when I joined the United States Custom Service.

N: Can you tell us something about the War College during the war years, during the First World War period? It was taken over by the Naval Reserves.

D: Absolutely. The entire building was nothing but Reserve

officers and enrolled personnel. They didn't call them enlisted personnel. They were enrolled personnel and the Reserve force. All the officers were Reserve force officers. They had a big personnel section.

N: They did?

D: Very big. Captain Eppley, Commander Eppley then, was in charge. They had an enormous Supply Department. Of course, they handled everything for the Second Naval District, which included Newport, Nantucket, Block Island, and New London.

N: When Admiral Sims came back in 1919, the College got going again and you were back on the scene in 1921. What was the College like in 1921?

D: Well, 1921 was a big class. Admiral Sims had requested that all officers who had had commands be members of the 1921 class. This class graduated in 1922. So I met all of the officers that I knew that were over in Queenstown on the destroyers. They were there. We had two submarines in Queenstown and those officers were there. The battleship officers--I didn't know any of them, but they were in the class. In addition, all of the officers in command of bureaus in Washington during the war were in that class. So you might say that '21, '22 class was the beginning of the big classes at the War College.

N: Admiral Sims was very influential at that time, wasn't he?

D: He was not only very influential, but he was very well liked.

N: He was.

D: He was very well liked, not only by the officer personnel, but the entire civilian personnel worshipped Admiral Sims. He was a gentleman to everyone.

N: How about Captain Lanning?

D: I never served with a finer officer than Captain Harris Lanning. He was without a doubt one of the tops. I was told when I was assigned to him that he was the number one man in his class. There was no question about it. He was a very, very brilliant officer. And he was well respected at the War College.

N: Mr. Dring, can you tell us something about the job you had in the War College?

D: Of course, being assigned to Captain Lanning, all of my duties were as stenographer on the game boards. In those days they were playing the big war games and they were very long.

N: Where were the war games?

D: The war games were upstairs, the big main room at the head of the stairs facing toward the water. It extended from one side of the building to the other. There were no chairs in the room at all. You had to make your moves on the game boards on your knees. The officers would get down on their hands and knees. Well, I took all the dictation from Captain Lanning

standing. As the moves would come in, they were handed by the marines to the staff officers who were conducting the games. There were the blue on one side and the orange on the other. As the moves would come in, the officers on the game board floor would make the moves. Captain Lanning would then dictate the moves to me. The games would go on until noontime. Then I had to transcribe all of the movements and all my notes so as to be ready the next morning for a short critique with the staff over what happened the previous day. I can't remember exactly how long they went on, but the blue-orange situation was a lengthy one.

N: Did you play any other situations?

D: I can't remember very well, but I think they played the blue-red situation, which was the U.S. and the British Grand Fleet. But, getting back to the blue-orange situation, I can distinctly remember that when the problems were submitted to Captain Lanning, they usually picked the brains of the Navy as Commanders-in-Chief of the two fleets. One of the brains back in those days was Captain J. M. Reeves. Another was Captain C. P. Snyder. I can remember those names because I can hear Captain Lanning discussing their problems with Commander Baldridge who was his assistant.

N: Where did these problems come from? Were they submitted?

D: They submitted the problems to the entire class. They had so long in which to solve and submit them.

N: Did they come from Washington or from . . .

D: No. They were all made up by staff at the War College. Of course, there were several who were always late in submitting their problems. That was my job to go around and pick them up. There was one particular officer who was always late. He was always referred to as Captain Juggy Nelson. He was the comedian of the class of 1921, '22, and the biggest man in the class. He was enormous!

N: Do you remember who the civilian personnel were associated with War Gaming then?

D: Well, there was a technical assistant on the game board named Hazard. And his chief draftsman's name was Charles Ward. They were both experts in their line.

N: They were?

D: Yes. They were considered the tops. They were the two highest paid civilians in the War College.

N: I see. I've heard an awful lot about Mr. Hazard in oral histories with other people who were associated with this period. They thought very highly of him.

D: It was Captain Lanning who got him his big promotion. He went to town on the staff over there and the president of the War College. He said, "This man is drawing a small salary, but he should be given the salary of an expert." So they gave him quite a promotion and made him a Technical Assistant.

N: You mentioned something about how long the war games

lasted?

D: Well, the game itself began right after 9:15 in the morning, and it lasted right up until twelve o'clock noon. There were no games in the afternoon.

N: What did the men do after twelve o'clock?

D: Well, they all went out to have lunch. Some of them went out on the banks of the War College lawn. They had a whole hour out there to sit in the sun. But Captain Lanning stayed in his office having a sandwich, also Commander Baldrige.

N: Can you tell me something about the maneuver board itself? You say it was close to the floor.

N: Did it have a grid on it or anything like that? Markings?

D: They had the markings, of course. I've forgotten exactly. It seems to me that all of the maneuvers began in that corner which would be nearest to the front entrance facing the banks going down in front of the War College building. The games always seemed to start in that particular area. Now I don't know just what part of the game board that would be.

N: How about the games themselves, Mr. Dring? Who were the opponents? What countries were involved and what parts of the world mostly?

D: Well, of course, the blue-orange situation was between the United States and Japan and that was all played out in the Pacific. Nearly every single one of those places that they mentioned in the games of 1921, '22, and '23 I read in

World War II papers. They were coming over the press. I read about them not only in magazines, but also in the New York Times. The Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet was Chester Nimitz, a former submarine officer, in the class of 1922 and '23. Nearly every one of the battles played in the blue-orange situation of 1922 to '23 were naval battles of World War II. Later during the Second World War, I met Admiral Taffinder, who was a member of the class in 1921 and '22, who was retired. He lived opposite me on the cliffs. I said, "It looks as though they played the 1922 - '23 blue-orange situation all over again. He said, "They all played it that way, including Admiral Tommy C. Hart," who was in the 1922 - '23 class. He had a fleet, and he played the same part of the situation we played in 1922 and '23. So, apparently, that 1922 - '23 class was probably the brains of the Navy.

N: Do you remember Nimitz very well?

D: Oh, distinctly, I remember him. He was a great tennis player. I used to see him play tennis over at the Training Station courts. I saw him a great many times. But I never saw him after I left the War College. I did run into Admiral Lanning after I was in the Customs because it seems in 1930 I was elevated as Deputy-Collector in charge of the port. I had to post a big bond. The Treasury Department made me give references of all my past ten years history. I mentioned

Admiral Harris Lanning who was then president of the War College. I never thought for a minute that an agent from the Treasury Department would call on the president of the War College to look for a reference. I met him later. It was in a Memorial Day parade and he was riding with the Mayor of the city of Newport. They happened to stop at Touro Park and Bellevue Avenue. I was with my wife--that would be in the 1930's. He said, "Dring, I fixed you up fine." I didn't know what he was talking about, until two or three days later on I called up and asked to speak to him. He said, "A Treasury agent called over here to find out about you, and I fixed you up fine."

N: That was nice of him.

D: Oh, it certainly was. He was really a grand man.

N: Getting back to the war gaming method again, how many people were involved in a war game?

D: The entire class was involved in the game. As far as the staff was concerned, they were the high ranking officers.

N: Did they divide up among themselves?

D: No, they were half and half.

N: How about the moves themselves that were made--did they have a certain time limitation on when they could make a move?

D: They moved as fast as the moves came in from the Commanders-in-Chief of the fleets. When the moves came in, the movements took place immediately on the game board.

N: Were the men themselves in the gaming room? Were they right

there making the moves?

D: The men that made the moves on the game board were getting the moves from their Chiefs of Staff by telegrams coming in by the marines.

N: But the Chiefs of Staff . . .

D: Didn't see anything on the game board. They drew curtains at times so opposing forces were blocked out.

N: What was the impression of the men when they were playing a game? Did they seem to be very interested in it?

D: Absolutely. They were all very much interested, and as I said before, the reason why was they were at that time with the brains of the Navy.

N: So they really took it seriously?

D: They certainly did. They held a critique after the games were over down in the lecture room. More than once there was a great deal of commend and occasionally some arguments.

N: How about your own personal impressions from observation? Did you think the war gaming method was the kind of thing that was a good learning experience?

D: They had to have it. The simple reason, as Captain Reeves said, "Here we are, we're building the COLORADO, the WEST VIRGINIA, and the MARYLAND, and where are we sending them? We're sending them out to the Pacific bases." So, naturally, he said, "The Japanese are going to match ship for ship. They see all these big, brand new dreadnoughts

in the Pacific, so they decided they'd match ship for ship."

So there was no question about it. It had to come.

N: The emphasis then was on the capital ship, wasn't it?

D: Absolutely.

N: How about the aircraft carrier? Was that coming into their thinking?

D: We didn't have any aircraft carriers then. They were in the building stage. We were just getting ready.

N: How about submarines? Did that enter into their war gaming?

D: Absolutely. They played a part.

N: Was it mostly a scouting part or did . . .

D: They had a scouting fleet and we had task forces. I thought it was the beginning of the task forces. I think it was Captain Reeves, I'm not sure, that started the task forces.

N: Evidently your impression of the class of 1921 - '22 was a very favorable one.

D: There was no question about it in my estimation, but the 1922 - 1923 class was better. Several of the '21 officers stayed over, I think, to the '22 - '23 class. They were given different jobs on the staff.

N: How about Admiral Sims? What was his view of war gaming? He evidently must have found great favor with it.

D: Well, I guess probably it was Admiral Sims who put big war games into effect.

N: But Lanning had the mechanism work smoothly?

D: He was the one that instigated it. There was no question about it. He had the brains. He was exceptionally good.

N: Mr. Dring, your time at the War College, therefore, ended in 1925?

D: The fall of 1925.

N: The fall of 1925. What were your impressions upon leaving the College?

D: I had been assigned to the junior class, as I said before, with Captain Willis McDowell and Captain Vernou, but the pay at that time was very, very poor. I was taking most of the stenography at that time, and I was doing the brunt of the dirty work over there. These other civilians were having it very easy. They had nothing to do except to type up theses. They weren't in on any of the exceptionally brilliant work--the difficult work. I saw where there was a vacancy for the Customs Service, so I put in an application for a transfer. I had a very good recommendation from Captain McDowell who had known me from the 1921 period to 1923. He was in one of those classes and then he stayed on and was made in charge of the junior class. Because I knew all the nomenclature of the previous war games, he wanted me badly. He hated to see me go. And when he found out what my salary was, he interceded for me but they just wouldn't give me an increase. And they wouldn't give anybody else an increase. Then I met Captain Rufus Johnson, who was Chief of Staff. He begged me to stay, saying

that he'd see that I got an increase. I said, "Well, they've already tried to get me an increase from the President, but he wouldn't go along with it. "So," I said, "I think I'll take the transfer." So I did.

N: Was the War College a nice place to work?

D: Beautiful. The surroundings were perfect. Of course, I had my own private office. Admiral Lanning was at one end of the building and my office was next to his. Commander Baldrige's office was next to mine. So I was all by myself. I was my own boss. I could go up and downstairs whenever I wanted to. It was a pleasant place to work.

N: Did you have any subsequent association with the War College during the interwar period? Did you ever have the occasion to go back there?

D: Well, Captain Simonds who was the Secretary back in 1926-'27 period over there heard that I had a set of pictures of the surrender of the German fleet. I had known Captain Simonds. I had met him several times, so he wrote asking if I'd be good enough to send over a couple of my pictures. I sent him the whole catalogue that I had. These were official pictures that were given to me by one of the officers on the QUEEN ELIZABETH. I happened to meet this particular officer later on when he came up to the headquarters in London when I was assigned to Admiral McCulley. It seems that Admiral McCulley was extended an invitation by Admiral Weymess, who was the first Sea Lord

of the British Admiralty at the end of the war, asking if he'd like to make the trip to Hamburg, Germany on the new British cruiser, the COVENTRY. Ironically, it was the first British ship torpedoed in World War II. The Admiral accepted the invitation and wanted to know if he could take his aide, who was Commander Hugo Koehler. It was the day the peace was supposed to have been signed, June 21, 1919. Admiral Weymess was informed that Admiral McCulley had been stricken with laryngitis and was in the hospital. And when he learned of this he asked if there was anyone else he would like to send. Admiral McCulley asked if he could send his Aide and Chief Yeoman. The Admiral agreed. So Commander Koehler and I went up to Harwich, England, where we left the COVENTRY much against the wishes of the British Officers. We later got into Berlin, Dusseldorf, Hanover, and Cologne. Then from Cologne to Brussels back into Paris and to London. So we really had a wonderful trip. Late in the fall, Admiral McCulley received orders to go to Southern Russia. It was then I was assigned to Admiral Huse.

Years later I met several of the officers who were on the staff. I had the privilege of meeting Admiral Sims in my own office. He came in during World War II before we got into it and wanted to know if he could send one of his old friends some cigarettes. He didn't want him to pay any duty. I said, "Well, I don't know. They're very strict on tobacco." Your

only bet is to get one of the ships that's going over there to take some cigarettes for him. He said, "Well, I don't like to do that." I said, "Well, if you get in touch with the American Embassy in London they might be able to help you." It happened that the friend he wanted to send them to was Admiral Bailey who was a close personal friend of Admiral Sims all during the World War I. Then later on Admiral Belknap came in after he was retired from the Navy. He had some member of his family that he wanted to send some things to. I had a long talk with him. And Alger Dresel, who was retired, came in and we reminisced about the days in London and back when he was in Washington at the Bureau and how he fixed me up to go to the War College. I met quite a number of them in those days.

N: I'd like to regress for just a moment here. Do you remember William McCarty Little at all?

D: The senior?

N: Yes, the senior.

D: No, except that I used to know where he lived and I'd see him occasionally. He was an elderly man. I remember his daughter who married Reginald Norman. I knew her brother Louis McCarty Little. He was in the class of '21 - '22 at the War College.

N: Of course, we consider him the father of naval war gaming at the War College.

D: I suppose so.

N: He started it all.

D: Of course, all the old games were blue-red situations. The blue-orange situation didn't begin until we started to send those big, brand-new dreadnaughts out to the Pacific.

N: Well, I'd like to ask you one final question. In view of what you've told me about war gaming and how important it was to World War II, do you think it has a place in officer training today--in view of the changes in the kind of weaponry we have? I guess you're familiar with the kind of war games we have now by computers?

D: It would be hard for me to say.

N: Have you ever seen one of those war games?

D: No. I was invited several times. I've been over to the War College, but I never saw the gameboard.

N: You say you knew Admiral Colbert.

D: I knew Admiral Colbert when he was a Captain. He came here from the Mediterranean fleet. He was assigned to the foreign officers' class. He called on me to come over and speak to the foreign officers and give them information as to how they could get their families over here and all their personal effects and so forth. He also wanted information about buying automobiles and at the conclusion of the course shipping the cars home. Well, that helped a great deal because I found out that none of the foreign counselors would allow a foreign officer to take a car back to their own

country. Some of the officers had bought very expensive cars, and they sold them before leaving for home. Shortly after Admiral Colbert was appointed president of the War College, he called me one afternoon and asked me to come over and have tea with him. So I went over and we had a short talk. He said, "I'm going to do an awful lot of entertaining over here. I hope you can help me out by fixing me up with some big shipments of wines and champagnes which I'm going to need." I said, "Well, I can inform you just what forms to follow to get them. Of course, you'll get them all at duty-free charges." He thanked me and later he wrote me a letter which I still have. That was the last I can recall of seeing him.

N: But you never did get back to see a war gaming demonstration?

D: No, I was invited to see the new war gaming. I told him about my experiences at the War College. He said, "Oh, you must come over and see it." I said, "Well, I hope to someday," but I never did get to see it.

N: Your impressions are that the war gaming as it was conducted during the period of time you were with the War College played a very vital part in the officers' training.

D: It has been written up in the papers and magazines. It did play an important part. It was also written up by Chester Nimitz.

N: Yes, he himself stated that everything he experienced in

the Pacific had been played out at the War College on the gaming board.

D: Those were the games.

N: Mr. Dring, I want to thank you very much. This has been a very enlightening experience, and I'm sure that your remarks will be of value to our oral history project.

D: I only hope that I gave you some information that you could use.

N: I'm sure you did. Thanks again.

D: You're entirely welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island
Oral History Program

Naval War Gaming Project

Manual War Gaming
at the Naval War College

Interviews 1 & 2

Interviewee:
Mr. Philip R. Gaudet
12 St. George Avenue, Middletown, Rhode Island

Interviewer:
Mr. Francis J. McHugh

September 7 & 22, 1974

Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island
Oral History Program

Naval War Gaming Project

Interviewee: Mr. Philip R. Gaudet, 12 St. George Avenue,
Middletown, Rhode Island

Interviewer: Mr. Francis J. McHugh

Subject: Naval War Gaming, Naval War College

Date: September 7, 1974

M: This is the first interview on the history of war gaming at the Naval War College for the Naval War College Oral History Program. It will deal with manual war gaming at the Naval War College. The date is September 7, 1974. The interview is being conducted at 444 Broadway, Newport, Rhode Island. My name is Francis J. McHugh. The interviewee is Mr. Philip R. Gaudet, who was connected with war gaming and related activities at the Naval War College for about forty years.

M: What is your name?

G: My name is Philip R. Gaudet.

M: What do they call you?

G: They call me Ray.

M: Where do you live?

G: 12 St. George Avenue, Middletown, Rhode Island.

M: Are you aware of the purpose of this interview?

G: I am aware of the purpose.

M: Are researchers free to use the information you are providing?

G: Yes, they are.

M: Ray, when did you start working at the Naval War College?

G: I started at the Naval War College on August 1, 1929.

M: What was the name of the activity that you started to work with?

G: The boys I worked with? My boss was George J. Hazard. The others were Charles Ward, John Wilson, Frederick Wagner, John Lawton, John Kimball Martin, and Mr. Smith.

M: What did they call this group?

G: The drafting room in the Maneuver Section at the Naval War College.

M: At that time they called it the War Gaming Section. Where was it located?

G: It was located in Luce Hall, third floor, directly under the cupola.

M: Right under the cupola? Right under the center of the building?

G: That's correct.

M: You could see all the way to Block Island?

G: At noon we went up there to have lunch in the cupola. Yes, on a clear day Block Island was visible.

M: At that time how many game boards were there? Do you remember?

G: There were two game boards--one on the east end of Luce Hall and one on the west end. Once was for the senior class and one was for the junior class.

M: Which floor were they on?

G: The game boards were on the second floor with an opening to the top where the people could see the games from the top. It was sort of a circular opening there on the east and west wings of Luce Hall.

M: Was there a balcony there?

G: Yes, a balcony, that's right.

M: They could stand in the balcony?

G: They could stand in the balcony.

M: Was there a skylight over it or something?

G: A skylight over the east and over the west, correct.

M: So that went right up from the second right up to the roof then.

G: Right.

M: I wonder if the skylights are still there.

G: I don't know, Frank. I left there on March 1, 1969.

M: Do you remember what the scale of the game board was? Was it four inches to a thousand yards?

G: My recollection then, it was around four inches to a thousand yards, and they sometimes used four inches

to two thousand yards.

M: Was it the same scale on both boards?

G: Same scale on both boards, junior and senior.

M: And they were both on the floor, neither of them were raised up on horses or anything?

G: No, when I started they were both on the floor.

M: At one time they were on horses or something?

G: At one time before '29, I don't know which year, they had them on big tables, lower platforms.

M: On horses?

G: Yes, on horses. They had the tables graphed off with the scale 1000 or 2000 yards, and then they placed the ships on with pins and later snap on strips.

M: Were all of the ships the same on both boards?

G: Senior and junior game ships were both the same, as I remember.

M: Those were not the ones with the pins in them?

G: No, the ships snapped on strips of different scales. The staff officers used small ships with pins and later strips with snaps, and they would work up a problem to the extent that would warrant the start of a game on the large maneuver board. We used two different scaled measuring wands, layed down smoke screen of paper or low curtains. We also used turning cards of celluloid. (All wands, screens, turning cards, and other useful

compasses, etc., were made in the Drafting Section.) We had fire effect diagrams to assess ship damage on individual ships or groups, and the staff assisted. We kept these diagrams up to date each year as ships are scrapped or armor changed on old ships or new ones added. Some turning cards cost \$15 to \$18 each. We made small turning card paper paste for use on 5050 charts.

M: Oh, they had some boards on tables to plan . . .

G: They had some boards on tables. I know we had some of the big boards--it was a very thick, soft pine board about 2½" thick that they used--we also used them in the drafting room, the blueprinter used them as a cutting table after they discarded the tables.

M: They were gridded?

G: They were all gridded, yes.

M: Do you remember if those grids were in groups of four or ten?

G: If I remember rightly, they were ten.

M: Groups of ten?

G: Ten. Yes, that was the big soft pine board.

M: Do you remember how many games they played during the year? Did they play a lot of games?

G: If I remember rightly, they had two major games for each class and then other minor games. Some of the

games would last a month, a month and a half.

M: Did you play all day?

G: They played in the A.M. and then they had lectures and talks in the afternoon. And that gave us time to prepare our sheets for the following day. At times the games were called because the U.S. force or opposing force had damage so great that there would be no use in playing or continuing the war games.

M: Maybe it would help to tell us how many classes were at the College.

G: Two classes. The senior and the junior.

M: Did they play separate games?

G: They played separate games.

M: How was the big game--did they get together on the big game?

G: Sometimes they did. They did combine the two classes and have one big game, that's correct.

M: Do you remember how many people were in those classes?

G: I should imagine in '29 and '30, this was before you came, Frank, that there were around sixty or seventy.

M: Total?

G: In each class.

M: It was less later on, wasn't it?

G: I don't remember it being any less, probably went down to fifty. It went up and down, but I don't think

it went below fifty.

M: Who was in charge of the games? Do you remember any of the people? This isn't the first game when you first went there. I know later on you were in charge of the maneuver section, but at that time, do you remember who was in charge of the games?

G: You mean the officers?

M: Yes. (Pause) What kind of games were played? What did they call them?

G: There were two major kinds of games--chart games and tactical board games. When I first went there, I don't remember too many chart games. Now you don't remember from '34 too many chart games, do you?

M: Yes.

G: You do?

M: Mr. Ward used to run those.

G: The charts. All right, well, from '34?

M: Yes.

G: Well, I don't remember them that early. They did the chart games that I know of were, as you mentioned before, they were on large easels and then they had the ships with the pins and placed them around. But . . .

M: The games you remember then . . .

G: I remember the big chart games from, say, 1940 on.

M: Then the games you remember were all board games.

G: All board games as far as I remember.

M: Who was the one in the War Gaming Section that ran them?

G: George J. Hazard. He was our boss, and he ran the war games. He'd go down there. And Charlie Ward did-- I think. Charlie Ward at that time did the junior games. And in the junior course then you had Johnny Wilson and Fred Wagner.

M: Were all the papers and charts reproduced by blueprint?

G: () blueprints right there which was right adjacent to the drafting room under the cupola.

M: And there was a lot of blueprinting going on all over?

G: And there was an awful lot of blueprinting then, and we all got in, helped cutting, trim, and even did blueprinting ourselves.

M: And all the lettering was free hand?

G: All the lettering was free hand. I checked in at the War College on August 1, 1929, and I started really to work on Wednesday, the following day. And my first job was laying down on the job on this big table working on maps with a big pantograph. That pantograph was made in Switzerland, I think you remember that, Frank.

M: That's the suspended one. They still have it, don't they?

G: They still have it over there.

M: You still use it.

G: Still use it. It's a wonderful machine. And that was my first job. The boss came in to me around twelve o'clock and he said, "Come on. Get off the table." He said, "Go down and have your lunch." I think we worked on that map, that was a large map which we had to color by hand. We had all these different colored crayons, and we did that for a display in the officers' rooms or committee rooms or even in the war gaming rooms.

M: Do you ever remember, Ray, putting any demonstrations on the board or what people moved the ships around? Historical battles?

G: Yes, I remember the Battle of Jutland, Dogger Bank, and we can tour all the islands there and the north of Europe and England. And we could put those--the complete Battle of Jutland--which required probably two or three days to put that on--colored chalk of every ship or group of ships. We put it on for the senior class, and we also put it on for the junior class.

M: Was this done as far back as 1929?

G: As far back as 1929.

M: You were doing Dogger Bank, too, at that time?

G: Dogger Bank, and . . .

M: How about Falkland Islands?

G: And Falkland Islands.

M: And Coronal?

G: That's right.

M: Then what did they do with this? They were all drawn out on the board?

G: No, the officers had certain groups of ships to move, and there was a certain three- or six-minute move or fifteen-minute move. They moved the ships when the director asked them to make their next move. All the moves are numbered from one to the end, and they'd move and then they would talk--the officers would talk with the staff about certain things, movements that were probably good and some that were not too good.

M: Did some of the students act the part of the real commanders in the battle and explain why they did these things?

G: That is correct. They had their own. There was a lot of criticism from both sides, constructive criticism.

M: Do you have the ships to both sides?

G: Ships to both sides. They would move three on one side and three on the other side all at the same time. Of course, the ships were coming closer together and then as ships were sunk, we took over the whole board.

M: Ray, who kept the history of the games?

G: Well, we had a historian when I first went there. His name was Alger.

M: Max Alger?

G: Owen Alger.

M: Owen Alger? /I think it was Max Alger./

G: Owen Alger. He was the historian, and Joe Whittier took over from him when he transferred.

M: Did the historian just go on and collect this information by himself?

G: The historian walked around the game board after the move was called for by the director, and the move was made. Discussion by Mr. Alger and finally Joe Whittier--they'd go around and ask information from the Commanders of both forces. Then, of course, they would also look at the board and they'd see certain moves and all that would go down in shorthand. Finally, it was transcribed into history.

M: These games were played in the morning?

G: These games were mostly played in the morning.

M: Do you remember when Joe Whittier took over?

G: No.

M: Ray, do you remember the gaming procedures when you first came there in 1929? How did people plan the game?

G: Frank, I remember when I went there on the war games.

Of course, we got the war game problem from the staff, and we'd go down and put the U.S. force on plus the enemy force that we were supposed to be fighting. We had a master plot which we would have the starting positions of those ships. When they all set on, a director of the war game asked for the first move, either a three-minute move or it might be a nine- or fifteen-minute move at the beginning to get the ships closer in contact with each other. Then as they got in contact in firing distance or visibility, by then they'd slow down to three- or six-minute moves. We'd plot after each move, and at that time we had to, some of the officers would probably move their ships a little faster than they could really go. Like 30 knots, we might find them 35 or 40 knots sometimes, trying to get close to the opposing force.

M: Excuse me, did the officers plot their own movements on the board?

G: The officers plotted their own movements, Frank.

M: Did they draw the tracks in chalk?

G: They drew their tracks in colored chalks, different colored chalks, correct. Say we took off each move, each three- or six-minute move, whatever it is, and at the end of each move they had to assess the damage on ships when they got into contact and had to know what

ships were fired on. All ships were numbered. They were actual ships in the U.S. Navy, and the other ships, too. Of course, you had all the damage that fire effect tables showed the armor and the guns that each individual ship carried. Even some ships would try to use more ammunition than they actually had aboard or fire more torpedoes than they had. Sometimes you had to tell the directors that a certain ship is going too fast or he's firing too many torpedoes. We would bring in all the information to the master plot and other draftsmen would replot the movement. Then they'd fire torpedoes. The aircraft came in on that too, Frank. The aviators were in rooms where they could not see the board. But if we sent them the plot that they could see certain ships, and we'd let him take a look for a minute or so to look at the boards, to see what he had actually seen, if he was in the air.

M: Were all the ships' players on the game board?

G: All the ships' players were on the game board. Of course, the aviators and the air and the submarine people were in their own rooms. They sent reports where they were, what they were going to do, and what they were going to fire by marine courier. Of course, at one time there they had pneumatic tubes.

M: Was this in that game room in 1929?

G: 1929, no.

M: What were you saying about the draftsmen who ran the game?

G: The head draftsman would take all the information from--I would have, say, one side and another younger draftsman had the other side. Our plots would be transferred to the master plot on the big board. Then all the information that was given to them from the air and submarine was plotted. Like if torpedoes were fired or if airplanes were dropping bombs or what not. And all that information we would put on that master plot. Then the director and the other staff officers would work from there. Then they could tell when they wanted to call another move.

M: What were your titles in those days, Civil Service titles?

G: George Hazard was . . .

M: He was the boss.

G: He was the boss of the draftsmen. War game expert.

M: And the draftsmen and the people in there were called the War Gaming Section.

G: The War Gaming Section, correct.

M: Who was Mr. Hazard's, George's boss? Was that the Secretary?

G: George's boss was the Secretary of the War College.

M: Now what were the titles of the other people?
Civil Service types.

G: Charles Ward was war game expert. He was No. 2.
George Hazard was No. 1 at the time. Johnny Wilson was
also war gaming . . .

M: What were John Wilson and the rest of you? Were
you draftsmen?

G: Draftsmen, right.

M: That's because you did all the plotting. You made
all the maps for the games.

G: Cartographical drafting.

M: Everybody except Kimball who was the blueprinter.

G: Kimball Martin was the blueprinter.

M: In '29 what nations were involved in the games?

G: Japan.

M: What color did they use for Japan?

G: Orange. Germany was black. Great Britain or
England was red. Of course, the U.S. force was blue.

M: Now was England allied with us in some of these
games, or were they always allies?

G: Yes, they were allied with us quite often in some
games.

M: Were they our opponents in other games?

G: They were our opponents in small games.

M: Now do you recall where these games were played--

where the area of operations was, in general?

G: North Atlantic was major--forces major battles.

M: With what countries?

G: West of England. South of Greenland, all through that section there.

M: The opponents were then Germany and . . .

G: England. And the Mediterranean Sea we used to have some wars. We used to have some battles there.

M: Who was the opponent in the Med, do you remember?

G: The opponent was Germany.

M: Was Italy involved in these games?

G: Italy was involved sometimes in combining that country with another country fighting us.

M: For example, Germany?

G: Germany.

M: Where were the other areas? How about off the coast of Canada, the Straits of Belle Isle and all through there?

G: Oh, yes. Very good. Quite often up around Newfoundland, off Nova Scotia, North Atlantic off of Maine.

M: Was there ever any attempts at amphibious assaults on this country in the East? Sea coast?

G: You're talking '29 now.

M: Right.

G: I can remember battles trying to stop forces from

coming over here. Enemy forces.

M: How about the Pacific? They had games in the Pacific.

G: Yes, we used to fight some small games in the Pacific against Japan, around the Philippines, South China Sea, and off China.

M: When you first came here, who sponsored the games, Ray. Who were the games run for--what departments?

G: Well, they had the Tactical Department and Strategic Department. Of course, the Tactical sponsored the tactical games, and the Strategy Department, the chart games.

M: Strategy Department?

G: Strategic Department, correct.

M: Now did these games continue pretty much on the same location for a number of years?

G: Location on the . . .

M: Same game boards. The game boards stayed in the same position, same locations for several years?

G: No, they moved around quite a bit. And if I remember rightly, we used to have some battles I didn't tell you about before. We used to have them down around Cuba. That was in '29, too.

M: Who was the opponent then, do you remember?

G: It was just an enemy as far as I know.

M: I think we misunderstood. The game boards themselves, did they stay in the east and west wings of Luce Hall for a number of years?

G: Well, they did from '29 until we moved to Pringle Hall.

M: The games pretty much were the same in the mechanics of playing?

G: The mechanics were pretty much the same.

M: Now that question ends this first interview with Ray Gaudet.

Interview No. 2--September 22, 1974

M: This is the second oral history interview on war gaming with Ray Gaudet. The date is September 22, 1974. The place is 444 Broadway, Newport, Rhode Island. Ray, we ended the last interview about the time of the opening of the Pringle Hall game room. Do you recall who designed that game room?

G: Frank, I know George Hazard, my boss at that time, had quite a bit to do with the design of the drafting room on the third floor. Also, the war gaming room itself, the balconies and everything and the plotting room. So I imagine his views were taken for the layout of the whole game room. The layout of the floor and everything.

M: Do you remember anything particular about the

Pringle Hall game room?

G: One thing that I remember very well, Frank, is when we put on Jutland, we had so many ships to put on and tracks that we used all different colored crayons which were very, very messy. We'd start from one end of the room and swing off on an ark toward the north of the game room and then head out and the ships would end out in the hall. These chalks were very, very soft. They got in your fingers, and they were very, very hard to rub off. I know the janitors had an awful job to erase the lines after the war game was over. The officers themselves got kind of mad certain times when they got chalk all over their clothes and pants. Of course, they had to bend down quite a bit, you know. They got pretty messy.

M: Now, was that chalk or crayon?

G: That was chalk.

M: This was not a war game. This was a demonstration?

G: It was a demonstration of the Battle of Jutland.

M: What did you use? What text did you follow?

G: We used a text written by a Commander Frost and George J. Hazard, Technical Assistant at the Naval War College at the time.

M: He was your boss then?

G: George J. Hazard was my boss at that time.

M: Can you tell us anything else about the Pringle Hall game room?

G: Well, the Pringle Hall war game room had a balcony around three quarters of the room. The plotting board was on the west end of the maneuver board. That's the master plot room which extended the whole width of the war game room board. The top side was used for observers, submarine men, or aviators that were given three-second, six-second looks at the board at that time. They got to look at the maneuver board by the director giving them information if they went over a certain part of that battle when it was in progress. Of course, you had observers up there. You had all the staff officers that would come in to take a look at the board. Also on the board we had screens that separated the two forces when they were out of range. We had to lay down smoke screens, small curtains, or sometimes drawing it out on the board with white crayon. I guess, Frank, you remember the range wands we had. We made all the range wands in the drafting room to scale to the board, and we had double and single scales. Sometimes we'd double it.

M: What about the communications in the Pringle game room?

G: Well, the communications, Frank, I remember that we

used marine runners, and we had the pneumatic tube system which included all of Pringle Hall and went into Luce Hall, especially the West end of Luce Hall.

Messages came that way, but if they wanted a message fast, they'd generally send a marine to a certain room to see an aviator or a submarine commander. He'd get the message back in short order. Mr. Martin told you about the time that the pneumatic tube system was getting blocked off, and Mr. Sayles, who was superintendent then of the building had to get his snakes out to get those messages out, and five or six messages would come out at once. The officers were waiting for certain messages. The basket system there--when you had two forces fighting each other, they'd be separated by curtains. There was a basket at the west end, the south end, and the east end of Pringle Maneuver Board. Messages were sent to the two forces from the main basket there near the plotting room. There was a switchboard there, Frank. Also, they had eight to ten phones which had direct lines to the different rooms that were running the games.

M: Can you tell me something about how the games were played?

G: Well, Frank, after we'd put the two opposing forces on the board, the director of the war game would call

for moves, call for probably a fifteen-minute move or thirty-minute move to begin with to get the ships into fighting contact. When they got into that contact, then they'd be probably a six-minute move, twelve-minute move, sometimes a three-minute move. We would plot from the board to a 50/50 chart, small scale, and we would transfer that to the master plot. The master plot was composed of two or more 50/50 plotting charts pasted together. We would transfer each move to the master plot. As the game continued, damage was assessed by fire effect diagram books that were there. The staff officers did that. Mr. Wilson was plotting at the time. He would plot the submarine firings of torpedoes or airplane flights. That will all be on the master plot. At the end of the morning session--well, the game was generally played just in the mornings. At the end of the morning session, we would take the master plot and from that make a reduction of it to be made into slides, three by four slides, and then give us the afternoon--a chance to clean up the plot again or else make a new master plot for the following morning.

M: Who moved the ships on the game board?

G: The officers moved all the ships on the game board. Of course, if some ships were slowed down by gunfire or torpedo fire, some of the officers sometimes would

continue their maximum speed, 25 to 30 knots. Sometimes we would check those and tell the staff officer, and that force would have to put his ship back. Sometimes some of the officers took square corners. They didn't use their turning card. Just picked up the ship at one point and moved it to another point which was much better for them. Captain Ingram finally became an Admiral. He was on a game at one time, and he was a short, rather stout man. A lot of the officers there got down on their knees, and others just bent over. I remember one time that Captain Ingram bent over to move his ships, and he bent over a little too far. The seam of his pants just split wide open. (laughter) One particular incident that happened, also in regards to Captain Ingram at the time . . .

M: Was this Jonas Ingram?

G: Jonas. Captain Jonas Ingram. We were having a war game situated in the North Atlantic, and Captain Ingram had 20 or 24 motor torpedo boats. He was supposed to go out under the cover of darkness. I think this war game was in the early morning hours during darkness. He was supposed to meet this convoy and see what he could do with all these torpedo boats. Well, he did. And when he fired his torpedoes, his torpedo diagram came into the department. He fired forty or fifty

torpedoes, and he converged the torpedoes to the center of the convoy. The captain at the time, the director of the war game, Ingram hated. He was the director and, of course, he was Ingram's overseer at the time. When they finished putting the torpedoes on the plotting sheet, they told the Captain he didn't get a hit. Well, that Captain was certainly a mad man.

M: This was Captain Ingram?

G: This was Captain Ingram. He didn't like it worth a darn. And the director said, "Well, I don't care if you don't." He said, "That's it. You did not get a hit." And all day he was mad as hell.

M: Did they have dirigibles in the game?

G: Yes, Frank, I remember dirigibles. They had dirigibles in the war games, but I remember very little about them. But they did use them for observation.

M: Was it observation used for scouting or something?

G: Scouting observation, right.

M: Who assessed the damage in the games?

G: Well, certain staff officers or students were assigned to assess damages. They had what they call fire effect diagrams which contained the fire. For one ship on certain ships and they used that booklet because a lot of sheets that were made in the drafting room to keep the running assessment of damage on certain ships. We

assisted the students or staff officers sometimes, and sometimes we did it ourselves.

M: Ray, you mentioned the records of the games. Where were these records kept?

G: The records of all war gaming were kept in two big steel cabinets in the drafting room. The records of all games and the histories. All ships were kept in the drafting room on big trays.

M: And what happened to these records?

G: If I remember rightly, between '60 and '62 or thereabouts, through the Secretary of the Naval War College, a lot of these were surveyed and destroyed. That happened in the course of, I should say, five or six years. They would survey a certain amount. Mr. Ward, my boss at the time, would take out so many years of war games and then get the okay from the Secretary to destroy them. It took five or six years or more to destroy the whole lot.

M: How far did these records go back, do you remember?

G: I remember some of these records way back in the teens, ten years before I went to work there, at least. Over ten years. When I was head of the War Gaming Department, very few of the records of the games were there, but through my immediate boss, Mr. Lawton, through the Secretary of the College, others were destroyed

completely.

M: So all the records were finally destroyed?

G: All the records as far as I know, Frank, were destroyed.

M: There was no effort to keep these copies or anything?

G: No effort to keep the copies, and some of those copies, Frank, were beautiful, beautiful jobs of George J. Hazard way back in the teens and the twenties. All freehand lettering.

M: What happened to the ships?

G: The ships were just thrown away.

M: And how about the . . .

G: I don't know. All of that material was just thrown in the incinerator.

M: What about the war gaming kits that had been sent to the fleet?

G: Well, I remember we had ten, fifteen to twenty of those, which follow the fleet. They were used at times, but where they went I don't know. As far as I know, I think the present boss gave in to probably some of the officers. I know some of the officers took those with them when they graduated or left the staff of the College. I know personally that Charlie Ward did give away a couple sets that way. Sometimes I think he got that word through the Secretary or the Chief of Staff.

M: So when you were head of the drafting section, then there were no game kits there, no fleet war gaming kits?

G: No game kits there when I was the head of war gaming.

M: What years were you head of the games? How long were you in charge of the drafting?

G: Approximately nine or ten years.

M: What year did you retire in?

G: I retired in 1969.

M: March 1, 1969?

G: March 1, 1969.

M: Ray, did you participate in any games except those in the Pringle game room?

G: Yes, Frank, as I told you before, in 1929 we had war games in the old Luce Hall. But then when we went to Pringle Hall in 1934, we had war games there up until I should say 1965--'64 or '65. Also, when they were working on the big monster down there, the big war gaming machine, we had war games on what was known as the BZ trainer which was located on the island, Coaster's Harbor Island there, near the bridge to Coddington Point. If I remember rightly, we played probably four or five games down there. You had to be on your toes down there because these images moving on the screen, you had to be quite fast to follow, to mark them down so that you could keep a record of a game. I remember

one of the younger boys at the time, he was just breaking in and (laughter) every once in a while he'd say, "Why did my image go?" It was quite a thing, and we had binoculars there to bring the board closer to us, to read it and follow the game as it proceeded. Then we had war games down on Sims Hall auditorium floor. I forget the year now that we went down there first. We had big moveable charts up on the platform. Students sat in their auditorium seats there.

M: This kind of game was not played on the board?

G: They were not board games, no.

M: Did they have board games in the Sims Hall auditorium?

G: Yes, they did have board games. They had to move back all the chairs, and we did have war gaming on the floor there.

M: But the sliding panels were used for the chart games?

G: Sliding panels were used for the chart games, correct.

M: And these games were conducted for what body of students?

G: Command and staff class.

M: This was not naval warfare?

G: This was not naval warfare, just command and staff class in Sims Hall.

M: Did you play any games in the Sims coffee mess?

G: Yes, we did have board games there in Sims coffee mess. I remember possibly six to eight games we played down there.

M: Who were these games played for?

G: Command and staff.

M: How about NCC?

G: NCC, correct. That is correct, Frank, NCC.

M: What happened to the Pringle Hall game room?

G: Well, they just turned it over into a big coffee mess, that's all. Built offices to the north of the room. I remember Commodore Carl L. Bates had an office in there. The drafting room did quite a few charts for him at the time. '64, '65.

M: That was the end of the Pringle Hall game room?

G: That was the end of the Pringle Hall war gaming.

M: Ray, did you participate in any of the games on the NEWS?

G: Yes, we did.

M: What did you do there in those games?

G: I was head of drafting and war gaming at the time the NEW games, and we sent a man down there to participate in the records he was keeping. I don't know too much about it, but Mr. Martin would. We did an awful lot of work for war gaming in the NEWS. Charts, reducing, enlarging areas and diagrams and everything for them.

We assisted them tremendously even though we didn't have any war gaming at the Pringle Hall place any more. We pretty well kept busy, three or four people working on the war gaming at the time.

M: Was your organization part of the war gaming department?

G: No, I was under the Administration Department.

M: What was your Civil Service title when you retired?

G: Supervisory Naval War Game Specialist.

M: Did you have other naval war game specialists working for you?

G: Mr. Norman Letourneau was naval war game specialist.

M: What were the others called?

G: Draftsmen. You want the names?

M: Yes, go ahead, read off the names.

G: Anthony Columbo and Gerard Lemothe were draftsmen.

Mr. Normand Letourneau was my assistant, naval war gaming specialist.

M: To the best of your knowledge, was the war gaming specialist employed any place else except the Naval War College?

G: Not that I know of, Frank.

M: At one time was Mr. Hazard and Mr. Ward known as war games experts?

G: Mr. Hazard and Mr. Ward were war game experts, right.

M: They were the only ones as far as you know to hold that title?

G: That is correct.

M: Ray, do you remember any of the pertinent facts about your time at the War College? Ray, does any other pertinent facts that you recall--interesting things that happened?

G: They had a golf course out in front of the War College. I think it was around six holes. We used to play golf out there and bang the ball around. We played with the officers sometimes. Also, the officers would play baseball with us noon times. We were one great big happy family. We knew everybody, and we knew all the officers. They spoke to us, and we used to have lunch together. I remember many a time we had lunch up in the cupola up in the center of Luce Hall. They could have the view of the torpedo station. On a clear day you could see Block Island which was about twenty miles away--twenty, twenty-one miles on a clear day right off the mouth of the harbor.

M: Is this all that you can think of at the moment, Ray?

G: Yes, Frank. I could probably remember some if I sat down alone and went through my papers, but that's about all I can say at this time. If I get any other

dope, any other records that I have home, I might think of a few other things I can give you, and call you up and give it to you by phone.

M: Thanks, Ray. I'm sure some of this information will be of great interest to researchers at the Naval War College.

Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island
Oral History Program

Naval War Gaming Project

Naval War Gaming
at the Naval War College

Interviewee:
Mr. John K. Martin
20 Mount Vernon Street, Newport, Rhode Island

Interviewer:
Mr. Francis J. McHugh

September 21, 1974

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, R.I.

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE AGREEMENT

You have been asked for information to be used in connection with the Oral History Program at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. The purpose of this program is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use.

A tape recording of your interview will be made by the interviewer, and a typescript of the tape will be made and submitted to you for editing. The final retyped and edited transcript, together with the tape of the interview will then be placed in the Naval War College Naval Historical Collection. Other institutions or persons may obtain a copy. These materials may be made available for purposes of research, for instructional use, for publications, or for other related purposes.

* * * * *

I, JOHN K. MARTIN, have read the
(Interviewee, please print)

above and, in view of the historical and scholarly value of this information, and in return for a final typed copy of the transcript, I knowingly and voluntarily permit the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, the full use of this information. I hereby grant and assign all my rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now known, recognized, or contemplated, to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

John K. Martin
Interviewee (Signature)

March 31, 1975
Date

Interview with John K. Martin - by Francis J. McHugh

Newport, Rhode Island - 21 September 1974

McHugh: This is the first oral history interview with Kimball Martin. The subject is naval war gaming. The date is September 21, 1974. The place is 444 Broadway, Newport, Rhode Island. My name is Francis J. McHugh. What is your name, please.

Martin: John K. Martin.

Mc: And what do people call you?

M: Kimball.

Mc: And where do you live?

M: 20 Mount Vernon Street, Newport, Rhode Island.

Mc: And what is your phone number?

M: 847-7782

Mc: And when were you born?

M: April 24, 1904.

Mc: Where?

M: Newport, Rhode Island.

Mc: Are you aware of the purpose of this interview?

M: Yes.

Mc: Are researchers and scholars permitted to use the information you are providing?

M: Yes.

Mc: When did you start working at the Naval War College?

M: October 5, 1919.

Mc: And when did you retire?

M: December 30, 1964.

Mc: And you worked only at the War College during those years?

M: Yes.

Mc: Who was the president of the War College when you first went there?

M: Admiral Sims.

Mc: The War College had been closed during World War I. When was it opened?

M: Admiral Sims reopened it after World War I on April 11, 1919.

Mc: So that was just before you came?

M: Yes.

Mc: What was the group called that you went to work with?

M: I worked in what they called the drafting room.

Mc: And who was the boss there?

M: Mr. George J. Hazard.

Mc: And how long had he been at the War College?

M: I think that he went there to work in 1913.

Mc: And did he work with McCarty Little?

M: Yes. I heard him talk about Captain McCarty Little.

Mc: He talked about McCarty Little? It was McCarty Little who introduced war gaming into the War College. Who else worked with you in this room?

M: Andrew K. Smith, another draftsman.

Mc: What can you say now about Mr. Hazard and Mr. Smith? When you first went there?

M: Mr. Hazard and Mr. Smith were still in the Naval Reserve when I first went there. Mr. Hazard was on the staff of the Atlantic fleet. He was a Lieutenant Junior Grade. Mr. Smith was an Ensign.

Mc: When?

M: During World War I.

Mc: And then he came back to the College?

M: Then he came back to the War College, and he was still in the Navy.

Mc: And you three were the only ones in the drafting room?

M: Yes. Until 1920. At that time John H. Wilson came to the War College as a draftsman.

Mc: What were your duties at that time?

M: My rating was messenger boy, but I was running a blueprinting machine.

Mc: And what were the blueprints used for?

M: Blueprints were reproductions of the war game plotted on the game board. These were the tactical war games. Then, of course, they had chart maneuvers. These were the strategic war games. They were plotted on lithographic charts of world areas.

Mc: How many game boards were there at the College?

M: There were two game boards at the College--both on the second floor, one at the east end, one at the west end.

Mc: Do you remember anything about the two game boards?

M: Yes. I do think that the east board rested on several wooden sawhorses about 10" high.

Mc: How about the west end?

M: The west one, I think did rest flush on the deck.

Mc: Who plotted the movements of the ships on the game board?

M: The student officers.

Mc: Who or what civilians worked on the game board?

M: Mr. Hazard, the chief draftsman, and the other draftsman, Mr. Smith.

Mc: What did Mr. Hazard and Mr. Smith do?

M: They copied the ship movements from the game board onto a plotting sheet which was a small scale reproduction of the game board. After copying each move from the game board, they then transferred it to another small-scale plotting sheet, which was called the master plot.

Mc: And then the master plot sheet was taken upstairs?

M: After several moves were plotted on the master plot, it was taken upstairs to the drafting room. There, sections of the moves on the master plot were enlarged by pantograph into diagrams of approximately 15 inches by 18 inches.

The ink finished diagrams were then photographed into glass, black and white slides of about 3 inches by 4 inches. These slides were used in critiques which were held in the lecture room. The lecture room was at the east end of the first floor of Luce Hall, directly under the east game room.

Mc: And did you make copies of them, reproductions?

M: Yes, I made blueprint copies of these diagrams. They were put together in sets. Each student was given a set, and they were used for reference during the critique along with the slides.

Mc: You were talking about the game board. What about the chart maneuvers?

M: Chart maneuvers were played in the lecture room. It was a good-sized room. It held 65 or 75 chairs which were removed from the room and tables were set up for use during the chart maneuvers. The maneuvers were plotted on printed charts. These charts were called "Strategic Plotting Charts."

The chart maneuver critiques were conducted in the same way as "Tactical Game Critiques," with slides and blueprint diagrams.

Mc: Was that where all the lectures were conducted besides the chart maneuver lectures?

M: Yes, and lectures. It was the only lecture room at that time.

Mc: Was there anybody living in the College at that time?

M: Not while I was there, no.

Mc: Was there a carpenter shop there?

M: Yes, in the basement of Mahan Hall.

Mc: Was there a tailor shop?

M: Yes, in the basement of Luce Hall.

Mc: Were there any other shops there for the people? Barber shops?

M: Yes, there was a barber shop, in the basement of Luce Hall.

Mc: And a liquor mess?

M: Yes, but not until after prohibition was repealed.

Mc: So not in these days, a liquor mess came in much later.

M: Much later date, yes. After prohibition was repealed.

Mc: Were the ships that were used on the game board--did they have little pins on them and they were stuck in the game board?

M: No. These ships were made of lead, and they were made to the scale

of the game board. There was a hole in the bottom center of each ship and they were snapped onto brass strips. These brass strips were also made to the scale of the game board. These ships were of various sizes to represent Destroyers, Light Cruisers, Heavy Cruisers and Battleships.

Mc: Did they have little sails on them?

M: Some had sails, yes. These ships were auxiliary ships, such as oilers, and other types which I do not remember.

Mc: And the numbers were painted on the sails?

M: Yes, the numbers were painted on the sails.

Mc: Do you remember what countries were involved in the games?

M: Germany, Britain, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Mc: And were they known by different colors?

M: Yes. Japan was known as the orange fleet, the British were the red fleet. And the Germans were the black fleet. And, of course, the United States was always the blue fleet.

Mc: But they used two different colors in the game board?

M: Yes.

Mc: The United States was always blue?

M: Yes.

Mc: And their opponents' ships were colored red?

M: That's right.

Mc: Do you remember anything about Admiral Sims who was the president when you went there?

M: I remember that the Admiral had a bicycle which he sometimes rode to the War College. He did ride it around the Station. Once or twice

I saw him riding it in Newport.

The War College at that time had a horse and carriage, and a coachman. Once in a while on a pleasant day the Admiral and his secretary would ride around the Island in the carriage, and he would dictate to her as they rode around.

Mc: How did you get to work when you first went to the War College?

M: Well, you could take the ferry boat. You could take the trolley car, which ran from Washington Square over to the Training Station, or you could walk. The ferry ran from the government landing into a slip at the causeway, as we called it then. It was a small ferry boat called the U.S.S. INCA.

Mc: Did it carry vehicles?

M: No, it was just a passenger boat, no vehicles. It was a nice ride, about a 15-minute ride.

Mc: Did it run very often?

M: Well, it ran several times a day; I really can't tell you how often. But it left at 4:30. We'd run down the hill if we wanted to catch the ferry. You'd have to run fast to catch the ferry. But a lot of people walked in spite of the five cent trolley fare and free ferry.

Mc: Was there a print shop at the War College then? When you first worked there?

M: It was known as the print shop, yes. The printing was done by mimeograph machines. It had been a real printing shop before World War I.

Mc: Before or during?

M: During World War I. At that time the War College was used as part of the First or Second Naval District.

Mc: When do you remember the first fire effects diagrams?

M: They were originated in 1925 or 1926 by Captain Reuben Bakenhus, CEC, USN. He was on the staff of the War College.

Mc: As you remember?

M: As I remember--after Captain Bakenhus had completed calculating these diagrams, the drafting department did the complete job of reproducing them. The draftsmen drew and lettered these diagrams. There were about 180 or 200 individual diagrams. I blueprinted about 200 copies of each. We then assembled and bound them into book form. The completed books were delivered to the War College Archives. They were issued from the Archives as they were Classified material.

Mc: Who was the archivist when you went to the War College?

M: A man named Mr. Scammel.

Mc: And was he Civil Service?

M: Well, that I'm not sure.

Mc: And who followed him?

M: A man named Mr. Whelpley, who I think was appointed by the president.

Mc: By the President of the United States?

M: Of the United States.

Mc: Do you remember who the President appointed and what President it was?

M: President Harding.

Mc: Can you tell me something about the chart games and the board games at that time?

M: Well, of course, it's chart games--all games, even tactical games, start out on charts in students' rooms until the forces came within sight of one another. And then, of course, the forces were transferred to the game board on the deck. Then from there on the game is played on the game board. They had marine guards. The marines are on duty on the game boards all through the chart maneuver and the board maneuver. But during the chart maneuver, as I remember it, the only communications were messages delivered back and forth from the game room to the chart rooms.

Mc: All messages were carried by marines?

M: Yes, as I remember, that was the only form of communications. I don't think there were telephone communications from the game rooms when I first went to the War College.

Mc: Did those two game rooms continue throughout your time at the War College? Did those two game boards continue in use at the War College?

M: The west game board was discontinued sometime before the move to Pringle Hall. We used only the east game room.

Mc: And that was the one that the board was set up on horses?

M: Yes. The east game room was the one that was set up on sawhorses.

Mc: Now what happened to that game board?

M: I think that the west board was cut in half and made into two huge tables for use up in the drafting room.

Mc: Now when Pringle Hall was completed, there was only one game room in Luce Hall, and that was the east end.

M: I'm quite sure there was only one in operation, the east game room.

Mc: And who planned the game room in Pringle Hall?

M: I think that Mr. Hazard had something to do with it. He may have made suggestions. I would say--I'm not positive. I think that because I know he did plan some things. I can't remember exactly what, but I know he did. He wanted to put an elevator in, but it never got in. I'm sure that he had something to do with the game room.

Mc: When was pringle Hall completed?

M: By 1934.

Mc: Were there any differences now in playing the games?

M: Well, the game board was much, much larger, and the communication system was the pneumatic tube system which went from the game room around to all the student rooms on the second and third floors. Then there was a cable stretched diagonally across the game room which, with a basket on it, the different staff officers transferred their messages. They wrote messages to put in this basket and pulled the string in the back, it would go across to the other corner. Some staff officers were in opposite corners of the room, then they'd feed them diagonally across where the cable ran. I don't know what the messages were or anything, but that's how they did send messages across the room to each other on the game board in the game board room.

Mc: Did they still have marines on the game board?

M: Yes.

Mc: Do you recall anything about the pneumatic tubes? Were they very useful? Did they ever get any problems with them?

M: Yes, they were very, very useful. They saved a great many steps because the message would be put into a container and placed in the tubes in the maneuver room and shot through the tubes to their

destinations. But once in a while someone would put the container backwards in the tubes and they would go off a bit, then stop and jam the line. The maintenance man, Mr. Sayles, who was in charge of that particular department did a very fine job in locating where they were stuck. He used a hacksaw to remove the section of the tube where the container was stuck. After removing the container, he would replace and solder the section back to the line. This happened often when the container was put into the tubes the wrong way.

Mc: You mentioned the game board. Where was the plotting room in relation to the game board?

M: You mean the master plotting room?

Mc: Yes.

M: Well, the master plotting room was another room off of the game board. It was a fine plotting room. It had, on the game board side, big glass windows. You know, you could look out onto the board. And, of course, the draftsmen used to reproduce the movements from the board onto the master plot in this master plot room, which was on the west side of the deck on the west side of the game board.

Mc: Do you remember any instances that you might want to mention about the game board, about gaming?

M: Well, when Admiral Kalbfus was president the second time--Admiral Kalbfus was president of the War College twice--we were known as the War Gaming Department. The game board was called the war gaming board. Admiral Kalbfus did not like the words games or gaming in the title of our department, so he changed the title from War Gaming Department to "The Maneuver Section." After Admiral Kalbfus changed the title to

the Maneuver Section, he didn't want to hear the word "gaming" or "war gaming." Lots of times when the telephone rang in the drafting room, if I was handy I would answer it, and I had a habit of still saying, "War Gaming Section, Martin speaking," you know. So one day the phone rang and I answered it because everybody else was busy. And for some reason or other I said, "Maneuver Section, Martin speaking," and I heard a "Ha, ha, ha, I'm glad you said Maneuver Section." It was Admiral Kalbfus who called.

Mc: Kimball, do you remember anything particular about the War College in World War II?

M: Well, this is what I think. As we said before in World War I the War College was closed as the War College, and I think that they were going to close the War College down as a War College in World War II, but Admiral Kalbfus was president. And he wrote to Washington and suggested that instead of closing the War College down and not trying to have a ten-months course for regular naval officers--have two five-month courses per year and the students be mostly comprised of naval reserve officers. And that way, I believe the War College was kept in operation during World War II because we had several classes--five-month classes during World War II.

Mc: Did you play many games during World War II?

M: Lots of games. Many games, indeed.

Mc: Were there any changes, or did they use the same techniques as before?

M: Yes, except toward the end they were holding the critiques of these tactical maneuvers right on the board. You know, they left tracks

there. They were only critiques after the game was over.

Mc: You weren't making plates any more . . . The critiques then were conducted on the game board?

M: Yes. They finally decided to hold the critiques on the game board. That eliminated all the work of making the slides and so forth. It was all right, too. Tracks were all right there, you know, and they argued back and forth and made critiques interesting. They were very good. One thing I remember in one of the junior classes was that one class was known as the millionaire class because there were several wealthy students in this class. That's why they referred to it as the millionaire class.

Mc: Do you remember any of their names?

M: Well, I can remember James Van Allen, for one. (inaudible) Of course, Van Allen being a Newporter, his name stands out in my mind. He was probably the most known student in this class.

Mc: Do you recall any instances that happened after World War II?

M: Well, when Admiral Spruance came as president of the War College, he instructed his chief of staff and secretary to have all the civilians, every employee in the War College, come up and go through the Admiral's aide room. And he, as president and Admiral Smith as chief of staff, would greet every one of us. And he shook hands with every single employee of the War College. And he did exactly the very same thing when he left the War College. And he stood out in the corridor and shook hands with people who didn't come through the office while he was there. He shook hands with everybody, everybody, every single employee.

